

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, WELLBEING AND CHILD SAFETY POLICY

1 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

Birmingham Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment, where risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure, to reach their full potential. Student Welfare encompasses the physical, social, emotional and educational growth of students and underlies all the school's policies, programs and activities. It addresses the health, safety, well being and guidance of students and is a fundamental aspect of all staff roles.

2 GUIDELINES

Birmingham Primary School will implement a range of principles and procedures to ensure a safe and inclusive school environment for everyone. The policy sets out the rights, responsibilities and shared expectations of everyone in the community including students, parents, carers, teachers and school staff. There will be a strong focus on positive behaviours as well as prevention, and early intervention in response to individual student needs.

The Student Engagement Policy relates to the three interrelated components of student engagement and school connectedness:

- **Behavioural engagement** – Students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extra-curricular activities of the school.
- **Emotional engagement** – Students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school; their sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.
- **Cognitive engagement** – Students' investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self regulation.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

The Student Engagement Policy is made up of:

- A school profile statement
- A whole school prevention statement
- Rights and responsibilities
- Shared expectations
- School actions/consequences

1. School Profile Statement

Our mission at Birmingham Primary School is to provide a learning environment that is stimulating and challenging with high expectations to develop each child's unique potential as resilient, resourceful and internationally minded learners.

We provide extra curricular experiences to foster student's individual interests and talents, and every child is valued. We respect individual differences, our community values and global cultures.

Our vision is the provision of excellent education accessible to all students. Birmingham Primary School aims to provide a challenging and inclusive education with an embedded focus on developing a culture of international mindedness designed to give every student success within and beyond our school. We strive for a culture of cooperation with respect for individual differences and community values. We aim to develop an international frame of reference, in response to an increasingly global school community.

2. Whole School Prevention Statement

Birmingham Primary School is committed to ensuring that all students are engaged, feel welcomed and are encouraged to attend school regularly. Our school's vision promotes that every student will be achieving their full potential. We believe that all students should be actively engaged in their learning and that our teachers provide a stimulating program that is relevant, exciting and fun. We promote the value of respect throughout the whole school community - respect between students, teachers and parents. At Birmingham, we value each other and foster positive relationships and behaviours. Students are acknowledged for displaying the school's values and individual and team achievements are celebrated.

Positive programs and practices have been established to encourage the full participation and wellbeing of all students at Birmingham Primary School:

- A relevant and stimulating curriculum.
- Enthusiastic teachers providing learning opportunities that engage student interest.
- Teachers catering for individual learning styles.
- High expectations for all students and staff.
- Teachers being positive role models.
- Opportunities to participate in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- Encouraging parental involvement in all aspects of school life.
- Actively encouraging high attendance and the promotion of "It's not OK to be away."
- Building positive relationship between teachers, students and parents.
- The school's values and the promotion of positive relationships and interactions.
- The development and encouragement of student leaders.
- Celebrating student achievements both in and out of school.
- School rules agreed to by each student to encourage positive behaviours.
- Whole school Transition program.
- Year 6/Prep and Year 5/Year 1 Buddy System
- AusVels – Health Education is an area of the curriculum that is part of every aspect of the student day – Personal Development and Life Education

Child Safety – Prevention Guidelines

Birmingham Primary School has a zero tolerance towards Child Abuse – all staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of a Code of Conduct when working with children.

- Promote a culture where children are safe, happy and empowered
- Provide staff with a child safe code of conduct
- Provide all staff and volunteers with regular training on child abuse risks
- Ensure all staff are aware of and act on their legal responsibilities under mandatory reporting
- Ensure and monitor that all people engaged in child related work, including volunteers are require to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check
- Ensure recruitment for all staff and volunteers indicate our zero tolerance of child abuse and child safe expectations
- Ensure staff are aware of risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks

3. Rights and Responsibilities

At Birmingham Primary School all students, regardless of disability, ethnic and cultural background, sexual persuasion, or religion will have equal access to education and support, according to their individual needs. Birmingham Primary School is committed to ensuring that a culture of mutual respect, the appreciation of individual differences and the positive resolution of conflict are intrinsic to the culture and behaviours of this school.

3.1 Guiding principles

Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

3.2 Equal Opportunity

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* sets out the types of discrimination that is unlawful. It aims to promote community recognition and acceptance of the equality of men and women, and the equality of people of all races, regardless of their religious or political convictions, their impairments, sexual orientation or age.

3.3 The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Birmingham Primary School endorses The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act of 2006.

The charter outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The Charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the Charter demands equality for all, it also emphasises the value of difference. The Charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider human rights when making decisions and delivering services.

It is important to understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.

All DEECD employees must act compatibly with the Charter and give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions.

Everyone should:

- encourage compliance with the Charter
- support others to act compatibly with the Charter
- respect and promote human rights

3.4 Students with Disabilities

Birmingham Primary School has students on the Program for Students with Disabilities, and as such, operates in accordance with the obligations of The Disability Standards for Education 2005 and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

3.5 Bullying and harassment

Definitions:

Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.

Bullying is repeated oppression, physical, verbal or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group.

Bullying can take a number of different forms

- **Physical bullying:** when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping, pushing or repeatedly and intentionally damaging another person's belongings.
- **Verbal bullying:** repeatedly and intentionally using negative words to upset another person, eg. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.
- **Social bullying:** telling lies about another person, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke, mimicking another person and deliberately excluding someone.
- **Psychological bullying:** repeatedly and intentionally using words and/or actions which cause psychological harm, eg. using intimidating behaviour, manipulating someone and/or stalking a person.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out via the use of technology. It includes internet services such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS. It may involve text or images (photos, drawings).

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
- spreading of rumours online
- sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyberbullying allows the bully to act anonymously if they wish to. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community. Being involved in online spaces – either at home or at school - requires students to behave responsibly. This includes:

- the language used and the things said
- how you treat others
- respecting people's property (eg. copyright)
- visiting age-appropriate sites.

Behaving safely online means:

- protecting your own privacy and personal information
- selecting appropriate spaces to work and contribute
- protecting the privacy of others (this can be sharing personal information or images)
- being proactive in letting someone know if there is something 'not quite right'. At home this would be a parent or carer, at school a teacher.

If a person is being harassed or bullied you should:

- Tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop.
- Discuss the matter with a parent if this occurs at home or a teacher that you feel comfortable with if it occurs at school.

Concerns will be taken seriously. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

If a student sees another person being harassed or bullied they should immediately report it to a staff member. Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

Birmingham Primary School endeavours to protect students and staff from all types of bullying and acts to address the problem as soon as it is identified. A process of restorative practice takes place with a staged response being recorded and enforced.

All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

The effects of harassment or bullying may include:

- poor health – anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes, social withdrawal

Rights and Responsibilities of Students

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Students have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyberbullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition• participate fully in the school's educational program• be treated with respect• expect a learning program that meets their individual needs	<p>Students have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• participate fully in the school's educational program• attend school regularly.• display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community; including during school hours and when travelling to and from school• develop as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Parents/carers have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• expect that their children will be educated in a secure environment in which care, courtesy and respect for the rights of others is encouraged• expect communication about, and participation in their child's education• expect that parents of other students will not approach their child for purposes of discipline, untoward interference or censure• expect that their child will not be approached by other parents regarding school matters	<p>Parents/carers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• promote positive educational outcomes for their children• take an active interest in their child's educational progress• model positive behaviours.• ensure their child's regular attendance at school• engage in regular and constructive communication with school staff regarding their child's learning.• support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students• ensure their children's care and supervision to and from school• Raise concerns about a child other than their own with the Principal, Assistant principal or class teacher, but not directly with the student

Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

Rights	Responsibilities
<p>Teachers have a right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• expect that they will be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment• be informed, within Privacy requirements, about matters relating to students that will affect the teaching and learning program for that student• use discretion in the application of consequences and sanctions in keeping with Birmingham Primary School's strategic intent	<p>Teachers have a responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• fairly, reasonably and consistently, implement this engagement policy• know how students learn and how to teach them effectively• know the content they teach• know their students• plan and assess for effective learning• create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments• use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.

4. Shared Expectations

Expectations from the School

Birmingham Primary School aims to provide a safe, nurturing, dynamic learning community that caters for the uniqueness of each student. We provide an environment and curriculum that challenges students to achieve to their highest potential and that develops knowledge, skills and resilience to be a successful global citizens.

Birmingham Primary School has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all members of the school community are respected. Shared expectations are intended to support individual students, families and visitors from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

As an effective school, Birmingham Primary School has high expectations for the whole school community. Our shared expectations are:

- jointly negotiated, owned and implemented by all members of the school community, including students
- clear and specific
- focused on positive and pro-social behaviours
- focused on prevention and early intervention
- supported by relevant procedures
- consistent, fair and reasonable
- linked to appropriate actions and consequences

The school has the responsibility to provide an educational environment that ensures that all students are valued and cared for, feel part of the school, can engage effectively in their learning and experience success. Birmingham Primary School's values are based on the Australian Government's nine values for Australian schools. These are:

- Care and Compassion
- Integrity
- Doing your best
- Respect
- Fair Go
- Responsibility
- Freedom
- Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion
- Honesty and Trustworthiness

The Principal, Assistant Principals and teaching staff will:

- Provide a curriculum that is relevant and challenging; encouraging success and improved student outcomes.
- Ensure that all students have equal access to education.
- Provide support and inclusive teaching practices through an appropriately modified curriculum for students with disabilities or special needs.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including instrumental music, sporting activities and school camps.
- Provide appropriate students services including those offered by external professionals such as psychologists, social workers and speech therapists as well as intervention programs for students requiring extra support.
- Celebrate diversity through the school's LOTE program, ISSE program, multi-cultural events and an integrated curriculum that acknowledges and celebrates cultural history.
- Openly promote home/school partnerships and encourage parents and carers to take an active role in the school and the education of their children.
- Include community partnerships which engage families and the community in ways that support student achievement and success

Student Expectations

Birmingham Primary School students are expected to adopt the school's values and adhere to agreed school rules, in an effort to create an environment which is conducive to learning and encourages students to make appropriate choices about their behaviour. Students are expected to attend school punctually and regularly. They should actively participate in the full range of education programs and opportunities offered at this school and progressively take responsibility for their own learning.

Students are also expected to:

- Be polite, honest and respectful to all.
- Be optimistic and enthusiastic about their learning and relationships with others.
- Stay focused on their education and take on new challenges.
- Take pride in their achievements.
- Respect the rights of others including the right to learn.

Students can expect teachers and other staff to:

- Be supportive, encouraging, fair and kind.
- Demonstrate the school's values through their own behaviour.
- Ensure that the school's values, rules and policies are adhered to.
- Provide instruction to meet their needs and abilities.

Students can expect that parents will:

- Be encouraging, supportive and interested in their education.
- Ensure that students attend school punctually and regularly.
- Provide access to relevant and appropriate resources to ensure that children are able to maximise their educational experiences.

Parent Expectations

Birmingham Primary School has an open approach to home/school partnerships, which encourages effective communication and relationships between parents, carers, teachers and the school. Parents are expected to take an interest in their child's education and support the school rules and values. Parents are encouraged to support the educational and emotional development of their child through:

- Accepting opportunities to be involved in school initiatives and programs.
- Being role models for their children by being involved in the school themselves.
- Actively supporting student participation and involvement in their education as well as extra-curricular opportunities.
- Encouraging a positive attitude towards school in their children.
- Reinforcing the school's Values Program with their children.
- Encouraging punctuality and regular attendance through the motto "It's not OK to be away".
- Supporting their children at home with homework and encouraging a positive attitude to such tasks.

Diversity in the school community

Birmingham Primary School endeavours to provide students with a range of experiences that highlight the qualities of diversity in cultures. Students are taught Italian and Mandarin.

The school aims to address diversity by:

- Maintaining a highly skilled, motivated and energetic workforce that is better able to meet the needs of a diverse school community
- Attracting highly skilled and diverse staff, making the school a preferred employer
- Increasing the range of knowledge, skills and experiences available in the workforce
- Enhancing the capacity for effective decision making due to the greater diversity of perspectives and inputs
- Creating more effective work teams due to increased participation levels and an increased capacity to solve problems

5. School Actions & Consequences

Birmingham Primary School is committed to developing relationships based on whole school and classroom practices to encourage positive outcomes related to engagement, attendance and behaviour including:

- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and engagement in learning.
- Creating opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in decision making through leadership initiatives and Junior School Council/ Student Leaders.
- Providing predictable, consistent and fair classroom and school environments.
- Student agreement to school rules and a whole school approach to discipline.

Birmingham Primary School encourages student engagement, regular attendance and appropriate behaviours through the implementation of whole-school strategies supported by targeted and individualised support when required. Prevention and early intervention forms the basis for all strategies. The school will:

- Seek to understand the student.
- Ensure there is a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers.
- Involve and support parents and carers.
- Involve the Principal, Assistant Principals and welfare staff in matters related to engagement, attendance or behaviour.
- Convene Student Support Group meetings when appropriate.
- Develop individualised learning, behaviour or attendance plans.
- Enact a staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour.
- Involve community support agencies when appropriate.

In promoting school attendance the school will:

- Articulate high expectations to the school community through the motto "It's not OK to be away".
- Celebrate 100% attendance of students and staff.
- Adopt consistent and rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absence.
- Follow up student absences promptly.
- Provide early identification and supportive intervention for students at risk of non-attendance.
- Provide a staged response involving support from the Principal, Assistant Principals, welfare staff as well as local community groups and agencies when appropriate.
- Support the student's return to school after a long absence.

In promoting positive behaviours the school will:

- Explain and teach school-wide and classroom expectations.
- Establish consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for in-appropriate behaviour.
- Convene Student Support Group meetings when appropriate.
- Refer students to community support agencies for specialist intervention.
- Involve key welfare staff including the Principal and Assistant Principals as well as specialist support staff including psychologists and social workers.
- Implement consequences for serious behaviour breaches which may include an in-school suspension, regular suspension from school, as well as expulsion from school.

Discipline Procedures – Suspension and Expulsion

Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at the school under any circumstances

When considering suspension or expulsion Birmingham Primary School follows the procedures listed in section 4.3 and 4.4 of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development guidelines published in the Student Engagement Policy Guide. Appendices 12 to 18 of the guidelines provide flowcharts and proformas for use in suspension and expulsion procedures.

A student may only be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success or where immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour.

Consequences which may be used prior to suspension include:

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class, sporting activity, excursion or incursion if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach or supervise. The offending student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities or sporting activities or excursions, and in more severe cases, required to leave the classroom or activity for a specified period of time. Where appropriate parents/carers will be informed of such withdrawals.
- Detention – teachers may require a student to finish school work that has not been completed in the regular classroom or to undertake additional or new work at a reasonable time and place. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this work. Where students are required to undertake school work after school, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes. The Principal should ensure that parents/carers are informed at least the day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that the completion of after school work would create undue hardship (eg: where students are regularly supervised by older siblings in the absence of parents/carers), the school may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with parents/carers.
- Convening of a Student Support Group meeting (see Effective Schools are Engaging Schools – Student Engagement Policy Guidelines for process required)

Birmingham Primary School Child Safe Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers and members are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to the Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Child Safety Policy at all times / upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, children with culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school principal or leadership team, and ensure any allegations are reported to the police or child protection
- Understand and comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the school principal or school leadership team
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Develop any "special" relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- put children at risk of abuse, use inappropriate language in the presence of children or express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have any inappropriate online contact with a child or their family
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the school principal or leadership team.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

DEPARTMENTAL REFERENCES

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools – Student Engagement Policy Guidelines
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/codeofconduct.htm>

School Accountability and Improvement Framework
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm>

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools
<http://eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibraru/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf>

Disability Standards for Education
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/handbook/legislation.htm>

Safe Schools
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/default.htm>
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/cyber/default.htm>
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/default.htm>

Charter of Human Rights
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchhrcharter.htm>
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cohrara2006433

Equal Opportunity Act <http://www.det.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/eeo/eeoact.htm>

Education and Training Reform Act 2006
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/reviewleg.htm>

VIT Teacher Code of Conduct
http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1543_Code-of-Conduct-June-2008.pdf

4 BUDGET

The budget will have a range of income sources including the Program for Students with Disabilities budget, the Student Welfare budget, The Professional Development budget as well as various curriculum budgets and may at times be self funded or funded by the School Council for the provision of special initiatives.

5 EVALUATION

The Education Sub-Committee will review the policy within a three year cycle. School Council will be responsible for the ratification of the policy.

The policy was last ratified by the School Council: 26th July 2016